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U.S. Department of State Middle East and North Africa Environment, Science, Technology & Health Hub Newsletter

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U.S. & Jordan Reaffirm Environmental Cooperation in Two Events

Joint Forum on Environmental Cooperation Under the FTA

The United States and Jordan reaffirmed their commitment to sustainable economic development in a September 8 public Joint Forum on environmental cooperation under the U.S.-Jordan Free Trade Agreement (FTA). U.S. State Department Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Environment Dr. Daniel Reifsnyder and Jordanian Minister of Environment Dr. Tahir Shakhshir signed an updated work program outlining environmental priorities for cooperation in 2014 to 2017. The work program targets: (1) institutional and policy strengthening for effective implementation and enforcement of environmental laws; (2) biodiversity conservation and improved management of protected areas and other ecologically important ecosystems; (3) improving cleaner production processes, building resilience to climate change, and encouraging the adoption of sound environmental practices and technologies; and (4) promoting environmental education, transparency, and public participation in environmental decision-making and enforcement. The U.S. government delegation included representatives from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Department of the Interior, the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Department of State, and the U.S. Agency for International Development, who met with Jordanian counterparts in closed sessions on September 7 and 8. The public session included 75 representatives from civil society, the private sector, and media who encouraged development of recycling and waste management services. This was the fourth Joint Forum since the United States and Jordan first established it and signed a Joint Statement on Environmental Technical Cooperation in October 2000.



H.E. Minister Shakhshir and Deputy Assistant Secretary Reifsnyder shaking hands after signing the 2014-2017 Work Program.

Photo courtesy of USAID Jordan

Eureka! Bus Launched at Princess Basma Youth Resource Center

While in Jordan for the Joint Forum, Deputy Assistant Secretary Dr. Daniel Reifsnyder helped launch the Eureka! Mobile Science Lab at a September 7 Green Expo and youth event at the Princess Basma Youth Resource Center (PBYRC). The bus is a mobile science lab and education tool to teach young people about the environment and conservation. The U.S. Forest Service and PBYRC partnered with the King Abdullah II Design and Development Bureau to design the bus, which features a wind turbine, solar energy, and a rooftop garden. The bus will travel across Jordan with a team of university-student volunteers who will encourage youth to think creatively and scientifically about protecting Jordan's precious environment. Families, youth, and educators from Jordan's governorates gathered at PBYRC to get a first look at the bus and meet with environmental NGOs and businesses, such as the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature, Jocycle, the Arab Youth Climate Movement, and others. The event that was broadcast live via PBYRC radio.



The Eureka! Bus with the PBYRC team and U.S. officials. Photo courtesy of PBYRC.



A young girl exploring an interactive game inside the Eureka bus. Photo courtesy of PBYRC.



DAS Reifsnyder (rt.) talking with entrepreneur Mahmoud Shattel. Photo courtesy of PBYRC.



Global Innovation through
Science and Technology



The GIST Initiative is led by the U.S. Department of State, and the Tech-I competition is implemented by AAAS.



Congratulations to the talented entrepreneurs from the Middle East and North Africa competing in the semi-finals of the GIST Tech-I Competition!

This year 67 individuals from 35 countries are under consideration, including entrepreneurs from **Algeria, Jordan, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, UAE, and Yemen**. They are competing against counterparts from across the globe. Competitors could win prizes and a chance to go to the finals at the Global Entrepreneurship Summit this November in Marrakech, Morocco.

Learn more here: http://www.aaas.org/sites/default/files/2014_Tech_I_Semi_Finalists_updated.pdf

Embassy Tel Aviv Celebrates International Coastal Clean-Up Day 2014

Embassy Tel Aviv coordinated a Coastal Clean-up at the Jisr az-Zarka Beach in honor of International Coastal Cleanup Day, September 21. Jisr az-Zarka, a fishing village, is the only Arab-Israeli town located on the Mediterranean seashore. Ambassador Daniel B. Shapiro and his family gave welcoming remarks and participated in the clean-up. The Mayor of Jisr az-Zarka and other members of the local council participated. Students, teachers and parents of the American International School, GAIA (Global Awareness, Involvement and Action) program, and Makif High School Jisr az-Zarka (an Arab school) joined forces for the event and had an educational tour of the nearby nature reserve. The event took place in coordination with Israel's Ministry of Environmental Protection to coincide with their Coastal Cleanup week program, and in response to U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry's call to action to protect the oceans.



Participants at the coastal clean-up. Photo courtesy of Embassy Tel Aviv

GREEN TIP: Go Green this School Year !

As you or your loved ones head back to school, consider this:

- Many supplies, such as pens and notebooks can be reused or recycled .
- If you buy lunch, take and use only what you need: one napkin, one ketchup packet, one salt packet, one pepper packet, one set of flatware.
- Remember to recycle your cans and bottles, and separate waste if your school has separation bins!

Source: <http://www.epa.gov/students/school.html>

Ozone Layer Recovering under the Montreal Protocol

On September 16, the White House announced a series of private sector efforts aimed at reducing use and emissions of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), which are potent greenhouse gases primarily used for refrigeration and air conditioning. This announcement came on International Day for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, to commemorate the signing of the Montreal Protocol in 1987, an international treaty to phase out the substances that contribute to ozone depletion. The news also came shortly after the UN released a report showcasing the initial recovery of the ozone layer thanks to concerted international action under the Montreal Protocol. UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Executive Director Achim Steiner stated that, "the success of the Montreal Protocol should encourage further action not only on the protection and recovery of the ozone layer but also on climate." Because HFCs are being used as alternatives to ozone depleting substances that were phased out under the Montreal Protocol, the United States, Mexico, and Canada have proposed a North American Amendment to phase down production and consumption of HFCs under the same successful framework. This could produce significant cumulative climate benefits, equal to more than 90 gigatons of CO₂-eq through 2050, roughly equivalent to two years of current anthropogenic emissions of all greenhouse gases. The amendment will be discussed at the next meeting of the parties to the Montreal Protocol from November 17-21, in Paris.

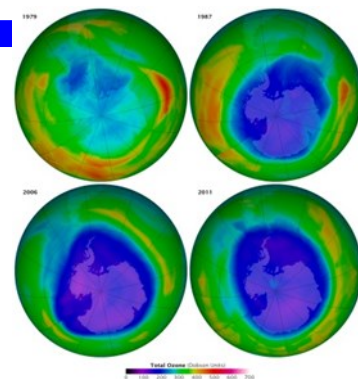


Image from NASA.gov

Yemeni Trainers Hone Their Biorisk Management Expertise at August Workshop



Photo courtesy of U.S. Department of State

Fourteen Yemenis sharpened their biorisk management skills at a seven-day Biorisk Management Trainer Development Workshop held at the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) in August. (Biorisk management pertains to the safe handling of infectious and biological materials, often in a laboratory setting.) The Yemenis represented various universities, laboratories and institutes from across five regions in Yemen, including Sana'a, Aden, Hadramout, Hodeida, and Taiz. The Department of State's Biosecurity Engagement Program funded the workshop, which was led by Jordanian trainers from JUST and experts from Sandia National Laboratories. During the workshop, the participants split into groups to build closer contacts with their colleagues and develop professional networks they can utilize once back in Yemen. Part of the group activity included a teach-back portion where the Yemenis applied the biorisk management information they learned and practiced how to effectively teach this topic to others. Following the workshop, the participants should be able to design and implement trainings for others on biorisk management.

In the News: Gulf Cooperation Council spending on new health facilities is expected to reach \$9.53 billion by the end of 2014, a 25 per cent increase from 2013.

Upcoming Health Observance Dates:

October 24: World Polio Day

November 14: World Diabetes Day

Regional Health Conference:

March 1-7, 2015: 7th International Conference on Health Issues in Arab Communities (Muscat)

Women in Science Hall of Fame Honoree in July: Dr. Huda Al-Duwaisan (Kuwait)



The first physician in Kuwait to receive a fellowship in family medicine from the United Kingdom's Royal College of General Practitioners, Dr. Al-Duwaisan is a graduate of Kuwait University's College of Medicine and is currently the head of the Yarmouk Primary Health Care Clinic. A leader in efforts to promote public health throughout Kuwait, she initiated a novel childhood obesity prevention program in Yarmouk's public schools, which was inspired and modeled after First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move" campaign. She is also working to expand the World Health Organization "Healthy City" model to Yarmouk. In addition to her duties at the Yarmouk Clinic, Dr. Al-Duwaisan is head of the Primary Health Care Faculty at the Kuwait Institute for Medical Specialization and also serves as a clinical tutor at Kuwait University. Her scholarly work has been published in local and regional journals.

Dr. Al-Duwaisan courtesy of Embassy Kuwait

Women in Science Hall of Fame Honoree in August: Dr. Abeer Al Bawwab (Jordan)

Dr. Al Bawwab earned her Masters and PhD in applied physical chemistry from Clarkson University in 1997. She has published approximately 50 scientific articles in her field, winning several awards for her research. In 2011, she was honored with the Arab Women Award in Science and Technology for Development and was named a distinguished researcher at the University of Jordan. In 2011, the Scientific Research Center Dr. Al Bawwab managed for many years won the HRH Prince El-Hassan Bin Talal Award for Scientific Excellence. Abeer is currently the head of the Chemical Engineering Association in Jordan.



Dr. Al Bawwab. Photo courtesy of Embassy Amman

Women in Science Hall of Fame Honoree in September: Dr. Hassna Chennaoui (Morocco)



Dr. Chennaoui obtained her PhD from the Université Pierre et Marie Curie, Paris, and Hassan II University, Casablanca. Her research focuses on meteorites and impact craters. She has published and lectured extensively on these topics and promoted preservation of geologically important sites in Morocco. She is an active member of the council of the Meteoritical Society and other scientific societies. Dr. Chennaoui is currently a professor of geology and geochemistry in the Hassan II University, Casablanca.

Dr. Chennaoui. Photo courtesy of Embassy Rabat

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Check out this Department of Commerce link:
<http://export.gov/industry/environment/>
 And visit the U.S. Embassy Web site in your MENA country.

This report is published by Hub Officer Elizabeth Hattingh and Hub Specialist Yara Abu Laban, with contributions from U.S. missions in the region.

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